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AUTHOR	Barker, Bruce O.; Bills, Lynn
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ABSTRACT

The engaged learning model centers on information and communications technologies as tools to assist teachers in helping students take responsibility for their own learning, become knowledge explorers, and collaborate with others to find information and to seek answers to problems. This paper defines engaged learning, and outlines the following eight characteristics of engaged learning, along with their associated descriptors: Vision of Learning; Tasks; Assessment; Instructional Model; Learning Context; Grouping; Teacher Roles; and Student Roles. The focus shifts to applying the engaged learning model to integrate technology into the classroom. The SURWEB (State of Utah Resource Web) student-focused multimedia tool and its applications makes it easy for teachers and students to work with video animation, music text, still pictures, and 30 graphics for local production of hypermedia learning projects. The tool enables students and teachers to create and produce multimedia presentations for interchange with other students or for delivery in their home schools. A sampling of addresses is provided from the several thousand student/teacher media shows. Media shows are continually being added in areas such as business; career guidance; foreign language; health science; information technology; marketing; mathematics; science; social studies; theater; and visual arts. While some skeptics may criticize the computer as a form of depersonalized learning, Internet-connected computers actually do more to provide learners with creative tools and put them in contact with other learners than any other telecommunications medium. (AEF)

Engaged Learning Using the Internet: SURWEB as a Student-Focused Learning Tool <http://www.surweb.org>

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by
Bruce O. Barker, Dean
College of Education
Southern Utah University
Cedar City, Utah 84720
(435) 586-7800
barker@suu.edu

and

Lynn Bills, Director
Southeastern Educational Service Center
685 East 200 South, Price, Utah 84501
(435) 637-1173
bills@m.sesc.k12.ut.us

A dynamic shift is occurring in American education as our society moves from traditional measures of learning as defined by student performance on standardized tests to a new paradigm of "engaged learning." Engaged learning is best defined as "learning that involves more student interactions, more connections among institutions, more collaboration among teachers and students, and more emphasis on technology as a tool for learning" (Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, and Rasmussen, 1994).

The engaged learning model centers on information and communications technologies as tools to assist teachers in helping students take responsibility for their own learning, become knowledge explorers, and collaborate with others to find information and to seek answers to problems. In an engaged learning model, teachers are seen as facilitators, guides, and co-learners (not just knowledge dispensers) with their students. Teachers mediate, model, and coach their students. While making use of electronic databases and information resources beyond traditional textbooks and chalkboards, the role of teachers and students periodically change --, students may become "teachers" and teachers may become "students" (Jones, et. al., 1994).

As engaged learners, both teachers and students become "technonauts" -- that is, much like astronauts explore worlds unknown, "technonauts" are knowledge explorers/navigators who use technology tools to find, exchange, and analyze digital information (Barker, 1998).

The eight characteristics of *engaged learning* and their associated descriptors have been identified and defined by researchers at the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (ISBE, 1995), and reported by Barker and Dickson (1999).

The Indicators of Engaged Learning

Vision of Learning: Engaged learners take responsibility for their own learning and are self-regulated. They define problems and goals that are meaningful to them, are able to work successfully in teams, and they have learned how to learn. The descriptors of a "vision of learning" include:

- Responsible: assumes that students who help define goals, design activities to reach goals, and evaluate their achievements, learn better than those who don't participate actively in constructing their own learning.
- Strategic: assumes that students who learn "how to learn" will learn better in the future.
- Energized: assumes that students who learn in an engaged learning environment find excitement and pleasure in learning and therefore learn better and seek to learn more.
- Collaborative: assumes that learners who can communicate their ideas, have empathy for others, are fair-minded, and who are self critical learn better than those who do not.

Tasks: Engaged learners participate in tasks which are authentic, challenging, and multidisciplinary.

- Authentic: assumes that the best tasks are related to real world problems, using real world technology tools, build on life experiences, and often require in-depth work.
- Challenging: assumes that learners who are engaged in complex tasks that often require extended time, learn better than those engaged in simple tasks of short duration. But, engaged learning principles can also be applied to simple tasks.
- Multidisciplinary: assumes that tasks which blend disciplines into thematic or problem-based projects cause more learning than do tasks that are narrowly defined by discipline.

Assessment: Assessment of student learning in an engaged learning model is performance based, generative, seamless and ongoing, and is based on multiple measurements.

- Performance based: assumes that when students understand and construct new knowledge from information received and create real things in the process, they learn best.
- Generative: assumes that when students help create assessments through an understanding of curriculum goals and an awareness of the differences between shallow and significant knowledge, they learn best.
- Multiple measurements: assumes that the best assessments should be multiple measurements from multiple sources.

Instructional model: In an engaged learning model, students are interactive and generative.

- Interactive: assumes that when the learner realizes that what s/he does has an effect on the instruction, then a more positive learning/teaching synergy is created.
- Generative: assumes that learner creator knowledge is better than teacher structured information.

Learning context: Engaged learners are collaborative and empathetic.

- Collaborative: assumes that in a learning community, intelligence is distributed among the members; and that the best knowledge is built through collaboration.
- Empathetic: assumes that full collaboration requires understanding of others and an active recruitment of individuals by the group.

Grouping: Engaged learners seek to work in groups which are heterogenous, flexible, and equitable.

- Heterogenous: assumes that groups made up of differing genders, cultures, learning styles, abilities, socioeconomic status, and ages cause the best learning among their members.
- Flexible: assumes that groups that are configured and reconfigured according to the purposes of instruction as a project develops provide the greatest learning opportunities for students.
- Equitable: assumes that heterogenous and flexible groupings provide the most equitable learning opportunities for individual group members.

Teacher roles: In an engaged learning environment, the classroom teacher is a facilitator, becomes a guide, and is a co-learner with students.

- Facilitator: assumes that teaches who provide resource rich environments, and a variety of learning experiences and activities cause better learning to take place.
- Guide: assumes that teachers who have and who practice the skills of mediation, modeling, and coaching enable learners to learn best
- Co-learner: assumes that teachers who collaborate with students, and who also seek to find answers to questions along with their students, effect greater learning.

Student roles: In an engaged learning setting, students become knowledge explorers, apprentices, teacher mentors themselves, and knowledge producers.

- Explorer: assumes that when learners discover concepts and apply skills by interacting with the real world and with others, they learn better than when they deal with abstractions.
- Apprentice: assumes that when learners observe, apply, and refine through practice thinking processes used by real work practitioners, the students learn better than when analyzing thought processes in an abstract context.
- Teacher/mentor: assumes that students learn more through peer tutoring.

- Producer: assumes that learners who produce real-world use products learn better than those who analyze abstract ideas, but never synthesize or create.

Applying the Engaged Learning Model to Integrate Technology in the Classroom

Traditional teaching roles must adapt to the changes imposed by new technologies. More and more teachers are gaining access to on-line resources through the Internet that can be activated at anytime, day or night . The same resources are also accessible by students, thereby changing the role of the teacher from a dispenser of information to a facilitator and guide. Interactive multimedia technologies, telecommunications, and the application of engaged learning strategies suggest new roles for teachers which include (Jensen, 1993):

- Teachers will be more involved in inspiring students, making them want to learn more, than in transmitting knowledge to them.
- Teachers will spend more time preparing materials that use hypermedia technology and can be accessed anytime.
- Teachers will do more to help students select learning goals and choose among multiple learning materials.
- Some teachers will build reputations as authors of hypermedia materials that are available on worldwide educational networks.

SURWEB an Internet-Based and Student-Focused Tool for Engaged Learning

The exponential growth of the Internet with its equally rapid developments in digital media capabilities is increasingly making it easy for teachers and students to work with video, animation, music, text, still pictures, and 3D graphics for local production of hypermedia learning projects. An excellent example is the SURWEB multimedia tool and resource database available free on the Web at **<http://www.surweb.org/>**. SURWEB is the State of Utah Resource Web initiated in 1995 by a consortium of public and private agencies including Utah's K-12 educational service centers, institutions of higher education, West Ed Regional Education Laboratory, museums, state and national parks, and Native American tribal councils and agencies. The $3.3 million project is in its fourth year of a five year grant funded by Federal Technology Challenge monies. SURWEB averages about one million hits per month, and in 2000 the expectation is to reach 10 million hits per month (Spendlove, 1999).

SURWEB has K-12 applications far beyond the borders of Utah. Its growing archives presently include over 37,,000 images with related text files. The project initially focused on national parks and monuments, geological formations, native cultures, and wildlife of western America but has since expanded to topics across the school curriculum. Its growing data base provides teachers with thousands of media shows, electronic field trips, and standards-based learning units with self-assessment quizzes.

The tool enables students and teachers to create and produce multimedia presentations for interchange with other students or for delivery in their home schools. A media

basket function, standards-based test bank, and on-line tutorial are a few of SURWEB's features. The media basket allows students or teachers to capture images from anywhere on the Web, add text, and thereby produce their own media shows. A sampling of the several thousand student/teacher produced media shows include:

- The Golden Spike National Historical Monument <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/gsn/coverpage/gsn.htm>
- Navajo Rugs <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/nvr/coverpage/nvr.htm>
- The Old Spanish Trail <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/OST/coverpage/OST.htm>
- Dinosaur National Monument <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/dnm/coverpage/dnm.htm>
- Zion National Park <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/zio/coverpage/zio.htm>
- Mountain Men Rendezvous <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/mtm/coverpage/mtm.htm>
- The Desert Tortoise <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/DTS/coverpage/DTS.htm>
- Native Plants and Medicine <http://www.surweb.org/surweb/images/npm/coverpage/npm.htm>
- Ancient Egypt <http://www.surweb.org/search/view_custom_show.asp?msid=354>
- Man on the Moon <http://www.surweb.org/search/view_custom_show.asp?msid=557>
- Fractals: The Art of Mathematics <http://www.surweb.org/search/view_custom_show.asp?msid=1542>

Media shows are continually being added in each of the following curriculum categories: agricultural, business, career guidance, dance, family and consumer science, foreign language, health science, health education, information technology, language arts, library media, marketing, mathematics, music, physical education, school-to-work, science, social studies, technology, theater, and visual arts.

Conclusion

The key to the Internet is it telecommunications capability. The Internet is about communicating with other people. While some skeptics may criticize the computer as a form of depersonalized learning, Internet-connected computers actually do more to provide learners with creative tools and put them in contact with other learners than any other telecommunications medium available. Web-connected computers promote the concept of a community of learners not only in traditional classrooms but beyond the classroom in virtual learning communities with global connections.

As educators move into the year 2000 and beyond, our nation's students need to develop skill and expertise in accessing, exchanging, and analyzing digital information

resources if they hope to be successful in the world and work place of the future. Without doubt, they need exposure to today's telecommunications tools in order to master the knowledge and the technology that will make them prosper. If the technology of the printing press and resulting books revolutionized learning in the 15th century, it is the technology of the computer and the Internet that will revolutionize learning in the 21st century. As the Internet continues to evolve and as students and teachers master skills in navigating through its databases, tools, and services, the information of the world will truly be at their fingertips and before their very eyes.

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